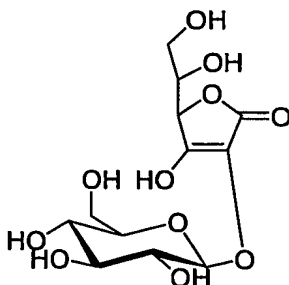


## CLAIMS

1. 2-O-( $\beta$ -D-Glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid represented by the following formula (1):



5

or a biologically acceptable salt or ester thereof.

2. A provitamin C composition comprising 2-O-( $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid extracted from a plant.

3. A composition according to claim 2, wherein the plant  
10 is a plant of the family *Solanaceae*.

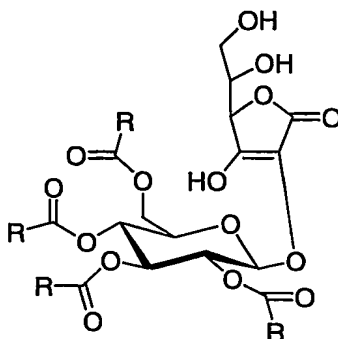
4. A composition according to claim 3, wherein the plant is a plant of *Lycium genuse*, or the fresh or dried fruit of *Lycium genuse*.

5. A production process for 2-O-( $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid by extraction from a plant.  
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6. A production process according to claim 5, wherein the plant is a plant of the family *Solanaceae*.

7. A production process according to claim 5 or 6, wherein the plant is a plant of *Lycium genuse*, or the fresh  
20 or dried fruit of a plant of *Lycium genuse*.

8. 2-O-(Tetra-O-acyl- $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid represented by the following formula (2):



wherein each R in the formula independently represents a C<sub>1-5</sub> alkyl group.

9. The compound of claim 8, wherein all of the R groups  
5 in formula (2) are acetyl groups.

10. A production process for 2-O-(β-D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid using a 2-O-(tetra-O-acyl-β-D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid derivative as an intermediate.

11. A production process for 2-O-(β-D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid by reaction of ascorbic acid  
10 and β-D-glucosyl compound using a β-D-glucosyltransferase.

12. A production process according to claim 11,  
characterized in that the 2-O-(β-D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid is produced along with 6-O-(β-D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid.  
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13. A production process for 2-O-(β-D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid according to claim 11,  
characterized in that the β-D-glucosyltransferase is a cellulase.

20 14. A provitamin C composition comprising 2-O-(β-D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid produced by the production process of any one of claims 10 to 13.

15. A provitamin C composition comprising 2-O-( $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid produced by the production process of any one of claims 10 to 13, together with 6-O-( $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid.

5 16. A food containing 2-O-( $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid according to any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 14 or 15, or a composition comprising the same as a provitamin C.

17. A food according to claim 16, which is a vitamin C-fortified food.

10 18. An ultraviolet damage protector containing 2-O-( $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid according to any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 14 or 15, or a composition comprising the same as a provitamin C.

15 19. A whitening cosmetic containing 2-O-( $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid according to any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 14 or 15, or a composition comprising the same as a provitamin C.

20 20. A wrinkle/sag-preventing cosmetic containing 2-O-( $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid according to any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 14 or 15, or a composition comprising the same as a provitamin C.

21. A pharmaceutical composition for preventing skin aging comprising the 2-O-( $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl)ascorbic acid or a biologically acceptable salt or ester thereof of claim 1 or the composition of claim 2, 3, 4, 14 or 15 as a  
25 provitamin C component.